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BRADFORD-ON-AVON URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER and
SANITARY INSPECTOR

FOR THE YEAR

1953



BRADFORD-ON-AVON URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health and the Sanitary Inspector

FOR THE YEAR 1953

MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I beg to present the Annual Report for the year 1953.

STAFF.

GENERAL PROVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES.

1. *Medical Officer of Health.*

Jean Murray, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H., (who is also Medical Officer of Health to the Trowbridge Urban District Council and Assistant County Medical Officer).

2. *Sanitary Inspector.*

Thomas J. Lees, Cert. S.I.E.J.B., Inspector of Meat and Other Foods.
(Resigned appointment on 31/10/53).

Douglas G. Masling, Cert. S.I.E.J.B., Inspector of Meat and Other Foods.
(Appointed on 23/11/53 and commenced duties on 1/1/54).

In addition to his normal duties, the Sanitary Inspector acts as Housing Officer and also assists to some extent in the department of the Council's Engineer and Surveyor.

3. *Other Staff.*

One clerk/typist who is employed by the Trowbridge U.D.C., and who affords part-time clerical assistance to the Medical Officer of Health.

One part-time Rodent Operator.

COMMITTEES DEALING WITH PUBLIC HEALTH MATTERS.

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|-----|--------------------------------------|
| (a) General Purposes Committee | ... | Chairman : Cllr. O. F. Brown. |
| (b) Housing Committee | ... | Chairman : Cllr. Mrs. A. A. H. Rees. |
| (c) Waterworks Committee | ... | Chairman : Cllr. M. Uncles, J.P. |

SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.

The majority of the working population of the old Saxon town of Bradford-on-Avon is absorbed in local industry consisting chiefly of the manufacture of rubber articles and equipment, some light engineering, horticulture and agriculture. Other residents follow occupations, mainly in engineering, in adjoining districts.

STATISTICS.

Area	...	...	...	...	...	2,005 acres
Population	...	...	...	...	...	5,579
Rateable Value	...	...	...	...	...	£29,491
Sum represented by Penny Rate	...	...	...	...	...	£115 : 12 : 9

VITAL STATISTICS.

Population ... 5,579

		M.	F.	Total	1952
Live Births—Legitimate	...	35	57	92	78
Illegitimate	...	0	5	5	2
Total	...	35	62	97	80
Still Births—Legitimate	...	0	0	0	2
Illegitimate	...	0	0	0	0
Total	...	0	0	0	2
Deaths from all causes	...	32	35	67	77
Deaths of Infants under 1 year :					
Legitimate	...	0	4	4	4
Illegitimate	...	0	0	0	0
Total	...	0	4	4	4
Deaths of Infants under 4 weeks		0	3	3	3 (Legitimate)

		Urban District	England and Wales
Crude Live Birth rate	17·38	per 1,000 of population.	Comparison 15·5
Corrected Birth rate	17·55		
(Comparability Factor 1·01)			
Still Birth rate	None	per 1,000 of population.	„ 35
Crude Death rate :			
All Causes	12·02	per 1,000 of population.	„ 11·4
Corrected Death rate	9·97	per 1,000 of population.	
(Comparability Factor ·83)			
Infants under 1 year	41·2	per 1,000 live births.	„ 26·8
Death rate of Infants			
under 4 weeks	30·9	per 1,000 live births.	„ —

Analysis of deaths from all causes.				Male	Female	Total
Tuberculosis of Respiratory System	...	...	...	—	—	—
Other forms of Tuberculosis	...	...	...	—	—	—
Syphilitic Diseases	...	...	...	—	—	—
Diphtheria	...	...	...	—	—	—
Whooping Cough	...	...	...	—	—	—
Meningococcal Infections	...	...	...	—	—	—
Acute Poliomyelitis	...	...	...	—	1	1
Measles	...	...	...	—	—	—
Other Infective and Parasitic Diseases	...	...	...	—	—	—
Malignant Neoplasm, Stomach	...	...	...	2	—	2
Malignant Neoplasm, Lung, Bronchus	...	...	...	—	—	—
Malignant Neoplasm, Breast	...	...	...	—	—	—
Malignant Neoplasm, Uterus	...	...	...	—	1	1
Other Malignant and Lymphatic Neoplasms	...	...	...	4	—	4
Leukaemia, Aleukaemia	...	...	...	—	—	—
Diabetes	...	...	...	—	—	—
Vascular Lesions of Nervous System	...	...	...	5	8	13
Coronary Disease, Angina	...	...	...	4	6	10
Hypertension with Heart Disease	...	...	...	—	1	1
Other Heart Diseases	...	...	...	9	5	14
Other Circulatory Diseases	...	...	...	1	3	4
Influenza	...	...	...	—	—	—
Pneumonia	...	...	...	1	2	3
Bronchitis	...	...	...	1	1	2
Other Diseases of Respiratory System	...	...	...	1	—	1
Ulcer of Stomach or Duodenum	...	...	...	1	—	1
Gastritis, Enteritis and Diarrhoea	...	...	...	—	—	—
Nephritis and Nephrosis	...	...	...	—	1	1
Hyperplasia of Prostate	...	...	...	2	—	2
Pregnancy, Childbirth, Abortion	...	...	...	—	—	—
Congenital Malformations	...	...	...	—	—	—
Other Defined and Ill-defined Diseases	...	...	...	1	5	6
Motor Vehicle Accidents	...	...	...	—	—	—
All other Accidents	...	...	...	—	1	1
Suicide	...	...	...	—	—	—
Homicide and Operations of War	...	...	...	—	—	—
TOTALS	...	...	...	32	35	67

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES IN THE AREA.

LABORATORY FACILITIES.

The Public Health Laboratory at the Manor Hospital, Combe Park, Bath, carries out all bacteriological examination of milk, ice cream and other foods. Some water samples continue to be sent to the Public Health Laboratory at the Salisbury General Infirmary. Messrs. Waterfall and O'Brien, of Queens Square, Bristol, act as Consulting Analysts to the Council.

HOSPITAL FACILITIES.

These are the responsibility of the South West Regional Hospital Board.

The Bradford-on-Avon District Hospital continues to be available for general cases whilst many of the residents can, and do, avail themselves of hospital facilities in Bath.

The Berryfield Maternity Hospital, Bradford-on-Avon, is used both for local cases and cases from the West Wilts Hospital Management Committee's Area.

Infectious disease cases (other than Poliomyelitis) requiring hospital treatment are admitted to the Trowbridge & District Isolation Hospital. All cases of suspected Poliomyelitis, and all proved cases, are admitted to the Claverton (Bath) Isolation Hospital and transferred, when necessary, to the Bath and Wessex Orthopaedic Hospital.

OTHER FACILITIES.

(1) *Home Helps.* The County Council Home Help Service gives great assistance in cases of acute illness and even more in giving assistance in the homes of aged persons.

(2) *Nursing in the Home.* One midwife and one nurse are available for the nursing of expectant mothers and the sick in the home.

In addition to the above the Wilts County Council also provide for the following services in the area :—

Mental Health.

Services under Part III of the National Health Service Act for the prevention of illness, care and after care, health education.

Ambulances and Ambulance Cars.

Health Visiting.

Child Welfare.

Vaccination and Immunisation.

NATIONAL ASSISTANCE ACT, 1948, SECTION 47.

No action under the above Act was taken by the Council during 1953. The attention of the Medical Officer was drawn to several cases of old persons living alone, but in each case it was possible to arrange for fuller supervision by members of their families, or by the provision of home helps, under the supervision of the County Health Visitor for the area—Miss P. A. K. Francis. One of the great difficulties encountered is that of the old person, who, although becoming more frail, is, through the exertions of other people, *not* living in insanitary conditions, and therefore excluded from the provisions of the Act. Such people may be dangers to themselves and to other people by reason of gas jets turned on and left unlit, candles used in bedrooms, oil lamps used for heating—or even lighting : they are independent, and not ill enough to require the services of their own family doctor : the doctors and others may try to persuade them to go voluntarily into homes for old people, and fail : and then the Medical Officer has to own up that there are no powers allotted to her and the Council to assist in their removal.

But again it should be recorded that the work carried out by the County Health Visitor, District Nurses and Home Helps in the care of old people in their homes must receive the thanks of the whole community.

SANITARY CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.

WATER SUPPLY.

Apart from a new main to serve a new and existing housing site, there were no major alterations to the water supply arrangements during the year. The Council are proceeding with negotiations for the provision of a new well to augment the supply and with a scheme to improve pressures in the high level area.

Only 3 houses within the Urban District are known to have private supplies; one house was connected to the towns mains supply during the year.

The estimated population served by standpipe is 390.

Nine samples of water from the towns mains were examined by the Public Health Laboratory, eight of which were reported upon as showing no evidence of pollution. The remaining sample, which was taken immediately after a burst on one of the mains, showed slight evidence of pollution (non-faecal).

Two samples of water taken from the main pumping well, prior to chlorination and treatment, showed a moderate degree of pollution with non-faecal coliforms.

In order to explore the possibility of the use of water from the River Avon, two samples were examined bacteriologically, but both were reported upon as being grossly polluted with coliform organisms, many of which were of the faecal type.

REFUSE COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL.

A once-weekly kerbside collection of domestic refuse is operated throughout the district. This service is maintained using a staff of one driver and two loaders and one Dennis 11 cubic yard side-loading vehicle. The estimated amount of refuse collected, based on check weights, was some 2,300 tons.

Refuse disposal is carried out on low lying land on the southern bank of the River Avon. Extreme difficulty is experienced in endeavouring to maintain any form of controlled tipping because of the acute shortage of covering material. Regular treatments of the tip faces using the synthetic insecticides were carried out. The Rodent Operator also carried out periodic inspections and treatments.

17 tons 2 cwts. 3 qtrs. of baled waste paper were despatched to the Board Mills during the year.

SEWAGE.

There were no major extensions or alterations to the sewers or sewage disposal works during the year. New electrically driven pumping equipment was installed late in the year at the Disposal Works.

Sewage effluent analysis taken on 8/7/53. Collected by the Staff of the Bristol Avon River Board, who have supplied the copy of results given below.

CERTIFICATE OF ANALYSIS.

Waterfall & O'Brien.

The Laboratory,
4 Queen Square,
Bristol, 1.
23rd July, 1953.

Of a sample of Effluent (Sample No. 215).

Lab. Ref. No. 3726.

Bradford-on-Avon Sewage Works. Taken 2.0 p.m., Wednesday, 8th July, 1953.
Occasional showers.

Appearance: Pale brown somewhat cloudy. Slight sewage smell.

Reaction: pH 7.67.

					Parts per million.
Free and Saline Ammonia	...	...	...	...	35.5
Albuminoid Ammonia	...	...	...	...	3.2
Chlorine (as Chlorides)	...	...	...	...	139
Equivalent to Sodium Chloride	...	...	...	...	230
Oxygen absorbed (4 hours)	...	...	...	...	16
Nitrite	...	...	...	...	Very strong reaction
Nitrogen in Nitrate	...	...	...	...	4.2
Dissolved Solids	...	...	...	...	810
Suspended Solids	...	...	...	...	36
Total	...	...	...	...	846

Dissolved Oxygen absorbed after 5 days' incubation (B.O.D.) 33.
 "Impurity" figure 24.

Stability Test: Darkens slightly, smell decreases a little.

PUBLIC BATHS.

The Public Baths incorporate an indoor swimming bath and 5 slipper baths. The swimming pool, which is open from April to September, is used by some 16 schools from Bradford-on-Avon and the surrounding districts. Treatment of the circulating water in the swimming pool consists of continuous rapid filtration and subsequent continuous chlorination. Five samples of water were submitted for bacteriological examination, two of which were highly satisfactory, the remaining three showing some evidence of pollution . . . these, however, were followed by the satisfactory results and were accounted for by a fault in the treatment plant which was subsequently corrected.

HOUSING.

No. of new permanent dwellings erected by the Council during 1953	...	...	41
No. of new permanent dwellings erected by Private Enterprise	...	...	5
The total accommodation provided by the Council since the war is now :—			
New permanent dwellings	...	...	200
Prefabricated houses	...	...	30
Flats	...	...	12
			242

At the 31st December, 1953, there were some 120 applicants on the Council's Housing Waiting List. The majority of these applicants comprised families living in the older type houses which lack the conveniences of modern post-war houses.

ACTION UNDER STATUTORY POWERS DURING THE YEAR.

A. *Proceedings under Sections 9, 10 and 16 of the Housing Act, 1936.*

1. No. of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs Nil

B. *Proceedings under the Public Health Acts.*

1. No. of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied ... 22

2. No. of dwelling houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices ... 2

(a) by owners ... 2

(b) by Local Authority in default of owners ... Nil

C. *Proceedings under Sections 11 and 13 of the Housing Act, 1936.*

1. No. of dwelling houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	...	...	...	...	...	2
2. No. of dwelling houses in respect of which undertakings not to use for human habitation were accepted	...	...	...	...	...	2

D. *Housing Act, 1949, Section 20.*

1. No. of grants approved for the improvement of dwelling houses	2
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HOUSING PROBLEMS IN BRADFORD-ON-AVON.

It is agreed by all who know it, that Bradford-on-Avon is one of the most interesting small towns in the country. From the very fact that its known history goes back to settled Saxon days (and there is reason to believe that signs of a prehistoric settlement exist also) : and that it has been built of enduring stone on rock foundations on its steep hillside; and that this site, plus continuity of habitation, has given the town an individuality possessed by no other. The difficulties of applying the Housing Acts without destroying its enchantment (appreciated especially by knowledgeable visitors who do not have to live in the old houses) seem insufferable.

Were it not for the stone terraces grouped round about the Saxon Church, Parish Church with Norman remains and Pilgrims' Chapel on the heights of Tory, which seem to have grown out of the rock, there would be no Bradford-on-Avon. But these terraces consist of houses which have been built on narrow shelves dug out of the rock, piled up one room above another to three or four storeys in height—with the rock and earth behind them up to second to fourth storeys : (each house one room per storey). Some have a small garden opposite the house across the only access path : some have an access path behind which allows for a back door in the top flat.

Some of the houses have been brought into line with modern requirements by their owner-occupiers, in that room has been found for W.C.'s and bathrooms. A few with "amenities" are now let to tenants who, like the owner-occupiers, consider that the magnificent situation more than cancels out the difficulties endured. But the tenants of some of the others and the unfortunate persons responsible for the delivery of coal, removal of house refuse and such, find that picturesqueness entails a great deal of hard work and effort to keep up with modern standards of cleanliness and general living.

From the Officials' and Council's viewpoint, the tenants' complaints, while entirely justified, raise many problems. "A roof is letting in rain." In brick and slate towns, a replacement of a few slates is frequently all that is needed. In our old houses, huge ancient stone tiles pegged down by oak pegs to the original rafters may have slipped—or broken—and when the owner finds that his builder advises that the rafters are also dangerous, he is faced with the problem of re-roofing completely a cottage that brings in a rent of a few shillings a week.

It is not realised by those outside the work, that once a complaint is made to the Sanitary Inspector and he has inspected a house, that he has to list all defects for the owner's consideration : if the defects were such that repairs could not be carried out at a reasonable expense, a statutory notice for repairs could not be issued : and unless the owner were willing to spend this unreasonable figure there is no alternative but to close the house.

The new Act in process of consideration may help in many cases, but again in a town the size of Bradford-on-Avon with so many problems to be faced, the amount of money that the town can afford to spend on old property has to be considered. We are only a little town, with a small rateable value. It has always seemed regrettable to me that such places, which are

part of the essential England, should be dependent only on what the Council with its limited spending capacity can do. The case of Lavenham in Suffolk always comes to mind as an example of what can be done by what might be termed "outside" co-operation.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

MILK AND DAIRIES ADMINISTRATION.

No. of registered Dairies ...	...	...	...	...	...	4
No. of licences issued authorising the use of Special Designations :—						
Tuberculin Tested (Dealers) ...	...	...	...	...	...	2
Pasteurised (Dealers) ...	...	...	...	...	...	4
Tuberculin Tested (Supplementary) ...	...	...	...	...	...	3
Pasteurised (Supplementary) ...	...	...	...	...	...	2

Twenty-seven samples of milk were examined by the Public Health Laboratory Service, and the results were as follows :—

	<i>Samples.</i>	<i>Satisfactory.</i>
Tuberculin Tested ...	11	9
Pasteurised ...	14	13 (one sample unsuitable for examination)
Raw (ungraded) ...	3	2 Biological tests Negative to Tuberculosis. One sample unsuitable.

ICE CREAM.

The number of premises registered for the storage and sale of ice cream under Section 14 of the Food and Drugs Act, 1938, is fifteen. All of these premises are concerned in the sale of wrapped ice creams only, as supplied by the manufacturers, and none actually make ice cream on their premises. Forty-one inspections and visits were made to registered premises during the year.

In general, a high standard of cleanliness was maintained in these premises, although it was necessary from time to time to draw the attention of occupiers to the need for improvement, and the necessity for informing the Public Health Department before any changes, either in the nature of their business or in the layout of the premises, took place.

Sixteen samples of ice cream were submitted for bacteriological examination, fifteen of which were reported on as Provisional Grade I and one as Provisional Grade III.

OTHER FOOD.

Types of Food Premises.

General Grocery ...	...	...	...	18
Butchers ...	...	...	...	5
Cafes and Restaurants ...	...	...	...	4
Fishmongers/Fruiterers ...	...	...	...	4
Fish Friers ...	...	...	...	1
Bakers/Confectioners ...	...	...	...	3
Sugar Confectioners ...	...	...	...	2
				<hr/> 37
Hotels and Inns ...	...	...	...	18

During the year, 76 visits were made to premises concerned with the storage, preparation and manufacture of food. There were no prosecutions either under the provisions of the Food and Drugs Act or the Council's Byelaws for the Handling, Wrapping and Delivery of Food. Several instances arose where it was necessary to draw attention to the provisions of the Byelaws, in particular in connection with the protection of food from contamination by flies.

CONDEMNATION OF UNSOUND FOOD.

The following foodstuffs were voluntarily surrendered during the year, after having been found to be unfit for human consumption :—

42 tins assorted foodstuffs	35 lbs. tinned meats
42 lbs. fish	46 lbs. sugar
30 lbs. dried fruit	53 lbs. mutton

With the exception of the latter item, all foodstuffs were disposed of by burial at the Council's Tip.

RODENT CONTROL.

The Rodent Operator continues to be engaged on rodent control work in the district for one week in four. During the year, some 46 premises were treated after having been found to be infested with rats or mice. A total of 251 premises were inspected as a result of survey under the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act, 1949.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

Age Group	Scarlet Fever		Measles		Acute Poliomyelitis non-paralytic		Whooping Cough		Acute Pneumonia	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
0	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	2	—	—
1	—	—	9	11	—	—	3	1	—	—
3	1	1	22	28	—	—	5	6	—	—
5	—	—	37	32	—	—	3	6	—	—
10	—	—	3	5	—	—	—	—	—	—
15	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
25	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
45-65	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
TOTALS ...	1	1	73	76	—	—	12	16	1	—

Puerperal Pyrexia ... 21 Ophthalmia Neonatorum ... 1

FOOD POISONING NOTIFICATIONS.—None received during the year.

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS.

1.—INSPECTIONS for purposes of provisions as to health (including inspections made by Sanitary Inspectors).

Premises (1)	M/c line No. (2)	Number on Register (3)	Number of			M/c line No. (7)
			Inspections (4)	Written notices (5)	Occupiers prosecuted (6)	
(i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities	1	2	2	—	—	1
(ii) Factories not included in (i) in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority	2	28	15	1	—	2
(iii) Other Premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding out-workers' premises) ...	3	—	—	—	—	3
TOTAL		30	17	1	—	

2.—Cases in which DEFECTS were found.

Particulars	M/c line No.	Number of cases in which defects were found				Number of cases in which prosecutions were instituted	M/c line No.
		Found	Remedied	Referred			
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	To H.M. Inspector (5)	By H.M. Inspector (6)	(7)	(8)
Want of cleanliness (S.1)	4	—	—	—	1	—	4
Overcrowding (S.2)	5	—	—	—	—	—	5
Unreasonable temperature (S.3)	6	—	—	—	—	—	6
Inadequate ventilation (S.4)	7	—	—	—	—	—	7
Ineffective drainage of floors (S.6)	8	—	—	—	—	—	8
Sanitary Conveniences (S.7)							
(a) insufficient	9	—	—	—	—	—	9
(b) unsuitable or defective	10	—	—	—	—	—	10
(c) not separate for sexes	11	1	1	—	—	—	11
Other offences against the Act (not including offences relating to Outwork)	12	—	—	—	—	—	12
TOTAL		1	1	—	1	—	

OUTWORK.

(Sections 110 and 111).

Nature of Work	M/c line No.	Section 110			Section 111			M/c line No.
		No. of out-workers in August list required by Sect. 110 (1) (c)	No. of cases of default in sending lists to the Council	No. of prosecu- tions for failure to supply lists	No. of instances of work in unwholesome premises	Notices served	Prosecutions	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Wearing of Making, etc. ...	13	8	—	—	—	—	—	13
apparel { Cleaning and washing	14	—	—	—	—	—	—	14

ANALYSIS OF VISITS AND INSPECTIONS.

Housing Acts, 1936 & 1949	...	...	...	...	68
Public Health Act, 1936—Nuisances :—					
(a) From Housing Defects	...	...	...	...	90
(b) From Animals	...	...	...	...	13
(c) From Tents, Vans and Sheds	...	...	...	...	6
(d) From Noxious Odours	...	...	...	...	2
Infectious Diseases	...	...	...	...	11
Refuse Collection	...	...	...	...	47
Sewage Disposal	...	...	...	...	22
Water Supply	...	...	...	...	81
Sampling of Milk and Ice Cream	...	...	...	...	44
Food Premises	...	...	...	...	76
Rodent Control	...	...	...	...	59
Drainage	...	...	...	...	101
Housing Applicants	...	...	...	...	103
Council House Repairs	...	...	...	...	126

JEAN MURRAY, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H.,
Medical Officer of Health.

DOUGLAS G. MASLING,
Sanitary Inspector.

